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By-LaPradd, Charles W.; Bonner, Avon A.
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The first-year objective of this experimental program was to give every student information relating to (1) college procedures, (2) study habits, (3) careers, and (4) personal adjustment. To accomplish these objectives faculty volunteers were recruited to assist the professional counselors in offering 15 instructional hours to each student. An in-service training program for counselors and teacher-advisors was conducted during the summer prior to implementation of the experimental program. Training included theories and practices involving lay helpers, group guidance techniques, consultative methods, basic learning, guidance, etc. One facet of the overall program was the establishment of a course with one hour of credit to be applied at graduation and required of all full-time entering freshmen. Twenty students were assigned to each teacher-advisor, who was to guide them during their 2-year stay at the college. Whenever a serious emotional problem arose, the student was referred to the professional counselor. At the end of the first year, a survey revealed that over 93% of the students said that they had been "helped." Individual personalized interactions of students with teachers received highest value ratings. Faculty relations were helped and the in-service training program was continued for a second year at the request of the participants. (RM)

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Dr. Charles W. LaPradd is president, St. Johns River Junior College, Palatka, Florida. Dr. Avon Bonner coordinated the guidance innovations at the college.

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An Innovation in Guidance at St. Johns River Junior College

Putting theory into practice

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By: Charles W. LaPradd and Avon A. Bonner

Methods and techniques to be used in counseling and guidance have been the center of a continuing controversy among educators for several decades. In the 1963 Review of Educational Research, Stripling and Lister found little significant increase in basic research, and a continuing controversy over such issues as counselor-student ratios, role of the counselor, and conditions of work.[1] In the 1966 Review, Daane and McGreevey found proposals for the identification of a counseling model, but no general consensus within the profession.[2]

In a survey of junior college personnel programs in western states, Yoder and Beals found varying programs and techniques.[3] The familiar Raines survey found deficiencies in about 75 percent of the junior colleges that were studied and inadequate counseling and guidance in about 50 percent.[4]

The 1955 Yearbook of the American Society for Curriculum Development sets out possible roles for teachers, counselors, parents, students, and other interested persons in the guidance process.[5] Carkhuff has completed a significant amount of research which supports the role of lay helpers in counseling.[6,7] Caplan has developed a method for successful consultative practices.[8] Bonner has produced a counselor-consultant model in which time, roles, needs, skills, and institutional climate are all considered.[9]

While sufficient research has been compiled and promising techniques have been developed for effective guidance programs, application of the emergent findings has been slow. With this problem in mind, Dr. Charles W. LaPradd, President of St. Johns River Junior College, Palatka, Florida, set up administrative procedures to build a system of guidance that would meet the needs of

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all full-time students on the campus. This report describes basic aspects of the program and some of the innovations that have been made during its two-year history.

The system was to be designed in such a way that generalizations from existing theory could be adapted to specific problems within the college. Experience had shown that many students had encountered difficulties in understanding such aspects of college life as rules and procedures, study, educational decision-making, and career commitments. Results from the 1965 testing program had shown that more than 1/3 of the student body ranked between the 9th and 12th grade level in academic achievement, and were not ready for a full college program without individualized help. Many students who claimed commitment to a career were seriously deficient in career information and concomitant educational requirements in line with their perceived objective.

Based on these facts, four common objectives were established for the first-year program: every student was to be given information relating to (1) college procedures, (2) study habits, (3) careers, and (4) personal adjustment. To meet these objectives, an arbitrary time period of fifteen instructional hours per student was established. Since the college had a counselor:student ratio of about 1:400, utilization of counselors alone to meet the objectives would have required nearly 6000 instructional hours from each. Very little time would have remained for students with severe emotional problems, and for the one-to-one relationships the college hoped to expand. With these realities evident, research and theories associated with lay helpers, group guidance techniques, and consultative methods were studied and applied to the local situation. The system was designed and has been

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modified in accordance with these theories and techniques.

Fortunately, the junior college faculty is well-trained in the information-giving function, and a large number of persons are willing to go beyond their regular duties in helping students. Volunteers were sought out from the faculty in accordance with the following criteria: (1) an expressed interest in the program, (2) a familiarity with college policies, (3) a genuine interest in students, and (4) course work in guidance and counseling. From volunteers, a sufficient number of teachers were selected to insure an advisor:student ratio of not more than 1:30.

An in-service training program was designed for the summer term prior to the first year that the system was in effect. All counselors and teacher-advisors were requested to attend. Consultants associated with both curriculum and guidance were brought in from the nearby University of Florida and the Florida State Department of Education. Basic learning and guidance theories were studied. One of the unexpected but highly valuable results of this program was a continuation of the in-service training through the following two-year period, based on the request of the participants. The increased interaction has created greater understanding and respect among the members of the counseling department and other college divisions; a program that was primarily designed to help students has also helped faculty relations.

A course, with one hour of credit to be applied to graduation, was required of all full-time entering freshmen. It was set up in accordance with generally accepted bases of curriculum and followed the form required for regular college courses. The teacher of each section was assigned twenty students who were to be his personal advisees during their two-year stay at the college. Administrative procedures were developed, in line with expected

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attrition and graduation depletion, to retain the desired 1:30 ratio.

This system resulted in an effective way to deal with problems associated with the cognitive domain, and it provided guidance information for every student. It was recognized that problems associated with the affective domain, especially those of a serious nature, should be handled by a professional counselor or through some kind of consultative system. Discussion among the members of the in-service training group resulted in a combination of techniques: the teacher-advisor who felt a need for professional help either consulted with a counselor or referred the student to the Counseling Center.

At the end of the first year, questionaires revealed support for the program by the students who were involved. Individual, personalized interactions with teachers received the highest ratings. Dissatisfaction was shown toward the textbook, and some students felt that the course was somewhat below college level work. A few resented the course because it was required. Over 93 percent of the students reported that they had been "helped" by the teacher-advisor. While the results have not yet been evaluated for the second year, initial evidence indicates increased acceptance.

For those persons who are rightly concerned with the treatment of the emotionally disturbed student, justification for the course can be found in the release of counselor's time for such purposes. In addition, the in-service program and increased interaction among the divisions of the college has resulted in much quicker identification of problem cases.

Evaluation techniques and improved feedback systems are vital to the success of the program. The College has recently added a Research and Development system through which data can be gathered and utilized in administrative planning and decision-making. Based on this information, continuous modification and change is expected in the advising program.

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